

# FAMINES IN THREE LANDS AS THE NEW YEAR BEGINS

**More Than a One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Part of the World's Population, Not Including the City Poor, Are Suffering Today for Want of Food---A True Story of the Cry of the People.**

ONE out of every 125 people in the world looked starvation in the face this morning. Twelve millions of people—more than one 125th part of the world's 1,480,000,000—are suffering today for want of food. These figures take no account of the city poor, who half starve the year around. They are the toll of well-to-do farmers and their families, of workers in fields where seed was sown but nothing was reaped. They are the record of the tax levied by famine at the opening of this year of plenty, 1907.

The levy has been made according to precedent reaching back to the Exodus from Egypt—on the nations where the government takes least account of men. A few years ago it was India. Today it is Russia, China, and Japan.

## Six Million Starving Russians.

A dispatch from St. Petersburg tells the story of Moscow's horror better than anyone in America can tell it. "In ten provinces of Central and Southern Russia the cumulative evils of three successive bad harvests afflicted the peasant population, who are now at the starving point. The Stolypin government is doing its best to cover up the horrors by optimistic tales of improving times, but the dreadful fact remains that nearly 6,000,000 Russians are half-starved and on the verge of starvation. Nearly 2,000,000 are actually suffering from direct pangs of hunger."

Heartrending details are given. "The aged and children suffer most," continues the dispatch. "In one village in Simbirsk province a small quantity of grain arrived from some charitable person for the children. They stormed the house where the meal was being doled out and cried and moaned, but there was not enough to feed one-twentieth of them. In other districts mothers throw themselves on their knees before the district officials and beg for bread, offering anything, themselves, all they have or ever will have. If only their weeping children be fed."

## Must Devour Offal.

"There are villages of 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants where there is literally no rye or wheat to be had at any price, where the villagers are eating famished and broken-hearted at approaching death. Hunger, typhus, and scorbutic diseases are rapidly decimating them. Pigs' food, disgusting offal, and refuse of all sorts, chaff, dirty straw—all have been consumed by peasants dying of starvation." Children wander for hours over frozen steppes gathering herbs and licorice plants. A sort of birch bark is being ground into the meal to make it go further. Worst of all, circumstantial stories are told of peasants whose moral instincts have given way to their hunger and who offer their wives or their daughters for food. St. Petersburg telegraphed the details of some such transactions to all the world a fortnight or so since and gave the prices of two young girls as less than \$30 each.

## Appalling Famine in China.

The President has told the conditions in China in a proclamation to the people of the United States, saying: "There is an appalling famine in China. Throughout a district covering over 40,000 square miles and supporting a population of 15,000,000, the crops have been destroyed by floods and millions of people are on the verge of starvation; thousands of dwellings have been destroyed and their inmates are without homes. An urgent appeal has been made for the assistance of the United States."

"Our people have often under similar conditions of distress in other countries responded generously to such appeals. Amid our abounding prosperity and in this holiday season of good will to man, assuredly we should do our part to aid the unfortunate and relieve the distressed among the people of China, to whom we have been allied for so many years in friendship and kindness."

But the President did not give the details. They are better set forth in a letter written from the afflicted district by a missionary, Rev. T. F.

McCrea, to ask help from the people of Shanghai.

## Ten Millions May Perish.

"Unless immediate relief be given," comes the warning, "8,000,000 to 10,000,000 persons will experience famine and great numbers will perish. Hundreds are already dying of famine and fever. Some throw their children into the water and then commit suicide. Many are selling their children for almost nothing."

"Officials are forcing the famine sufferers with gunboats and soldiers to remain in the flooded districts, while failing to supply food, and they must starve."

Disturbances are taking place, and will become serious. The starving people feel they may as well die by the sword as by starvation. There will be no relief until crops ripen next June, and prospects are awful to contemplate."

A year ago corresponding stories came from north Japan, where five millions would have starved save for rations issued by the government. Russia has suffered with almost every harvest back to beyond the years 1891 and 1892, when American flour and American enterprise kept millions of serfs alive. Tauris, in Asia Minor, was afflicted in 1890 as China, at the other side of the continent, is afflicted today. Cashmere, Moore's "Eden on Earth," is thought to have lost a million of her people through starvation in 1878, and perhaps as many more through fever incurred while the famine lasted. In the same year Persia lost thousands of fighting men, and many thousands more of their dependents in 1871. So the record runs back to the period of India's melancholy distinction.

Thirty-four famines, above twenty on a large scale, laid their heavy hands on the peninsula in the course of the century just closed. There is no estimate of the total loss of life. The East India Company, which ruled the territory until 1858, did not make statistics a specialty. But the seven greater famines which followed each other in waves from 1833 to 1890 cost the lives of 4,939,000 persons known, and nobody can tell how many unknown. Twenty millions of our fellows are thought to have starved to death since America first began to send of her abundance to less fortunate nations, which was in the year 1801.

## What a Famine Means.

Newspaper readers do not really sense a famine. They read, as some of them have just read, that 2,000,000 of their brothers in Russia or 10,000,000 in China are famine-struck and their minds stop either at little groups of meaningless elphers or at a word which is subconsciously associated with great fortunes.

Nor is this surprising. For the average man and woman in America never know real hunger. Most of them have never gone a day without food. Practically none of them has gone two days. And starvation, with its months of half rations and its weeks of no rations at all needs a basis in personal experience to be understood.

The details given as to Russia ought to help. The picture of mothers offering themselves to any one with a pound of meal for their babes ought to burn in a realization of their privation on the most phlegmatic mind. If that will not serve, perhaps the account of mothers throwing their children into the dirty waters of the Chinese canals, the sale of little girls for \$2 each, the picture of grown men and women grinding bones and eating the powder—perhaps some of these details will tell of the overpowering craving after food, dreadful suffering, and the relief of death, often welcomed with open arms, which every man, woman, and child of those twenty millions endured.

## Little Data on Subject.

With all the human interest such a subject excites, there is curiously little exact information to be had about famines. There is only one work in English which treats the subject comprehensively—"The Famines of the World, Past and Present," by Cornelius Walford, an Englishman and a statistician. Even he, who spent months compiling a table of the 350 great famines of history, can say only: "A table of the total deaths resulting from famines, even in one generation of men, would present a terrible picture. This can never be prevented; the materials for its compilation nowhere exist." No one knows or can ever learn how many millions were lost in Russia in 1891 and 1892. The governors of the several provinces affected did not collate the reports of their subordinates; and the government of the empire did not obtain reports from the governors. Similarly in China, in India, in every nation which the telegraph and the newspaper cannot probe, the only reports given to the world are such as leak through travelers or stare at the reader between the lines of official generalizations.



BEGGING JAPANESE IDOL FOR FOOD.

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## Causes of Famines.

Mr. Walford's 350 famines—the list to which most books of reference owe their information on this subject—are all due to some one or more of twelve causes. Five of them are natural causes—rain, frost, drought, meteorological phenomena, and insects. The remainder are artificial—war, defective agriculture, defective transport,

the evil which insects can cause in the damage done to cattle by the tsetse fly and to the forests by the wood moth. That experience ought to help it understand what the province of Bosnia suffered in 1878 when locusts appeared and consumed all the vegetation of every sort and left the people without a husel of grain. The famine of '78 in North China began with a visitation of insects.

The Book of Exodus tells of the worst plague of insects, however, when flies and locusts "covered the face of the whole earth so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left; and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt."

Whatever the cause, famines are growing less frequent. Irrigation is not only moistening the ground in times of drought but in certain districts where the rainfall is highly variable its canals are draining the land in time of flood. Science is finding means to fight murrains of every sort, whether of insects, rats, or worms. In case of famine due to any other of the causes indicated, civilization is doing much to offset their effect by bringing the afflicted communities into such convenient touch with their more fortunate neighbors that the privation of one is by the natural law of commerce divided among many.

Modern Transportation an Offset. So it is assumed that modern facilities of transportation will prevent recurrence of the potato famine which cost Ireland 350,000 people in the six years beginning 1846; of the famine due to over-exportation of grain from England in 1856, of the wholesale privation of Rome when the Tiber overflowed her banks in 1829, of the "india hunger," which John of Brompton notes in 1776; even of the famine which bore so hardly on Palestine in the time of Abraham. Wherever ves-

els can ply, trains run, or wagons roll corn will be carried to the purchaser who wants it badly enough to pay the seller's price. Where the people cannot pay an affluent government, like that of England, or an enterprising government, like that of Japan, can. Where neither people nor government can pay, as appears to be the case in Russia and China, there is an indictment of the government for an inefficiency which only the world's charity can offset.

Rare Artistic Finds Dr. Von Lecoq, who has been traveling in the most remote parts of Central Asia on a scientific mission with an expedition charged by the Prussian government, has arrived at the capital of Cashmere with an important collection of articles of archaeological interest. This collection includes several paintings and a number of manuscripts in ten different languages, one in a wholly unknown tongue. It is considered that this is one of the most important archaeological finds since the days of Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir Austen Levard.

Peasants without Food in Russia. legislative interference, currency restrictions, speculation, and misapplication of grain. By far the greater number of famines have been caused by rain or drought.

Thus, in Russia, today, the trouble is due to "three successive bad harvests," and they are due in turn to too much rain for three successive years. In China the crops "have been destroyed by floods." In Japan there were alternating seasons of rain and drought with the tilters of the soil off to the war with Russia. India would have sustained her 4,000,000 had she had irrigation canals. Australia lost 10,000,000 sheep in 1878 because of prolonged dry weather. In the province of Sind there was once no rain for two years and that circumstance

chiefly accounts for the famine Indian of that period.

But there have been many famines due to other causes—to frosts, comets, cyclones, earthquakes, plagues of insects, vermin, and rats, and there are scores of sensible men of science who accredit not a few to the influence of sun spots on the earth.

In France, in 1872, the district of Pons was stripped bare by a sudden freezing during a heavy shower of rain. Tender twigs were found to be an inch thick with ice. Hardly any tree could stand the weight; and beeches, ashes, chestnuts, and oaks fell to the ground. The potatoes were frozen in the ground and the vines blasted in the vineyards. Coggia's comet, discovered at Mar-

# MILLIONS STARVING IN JAPAN, CHINA AND RUSSIA

## Lived 30 Years In Missouri Cave

SEVEN miles north of New Cambria, Mo., is a man who for thirty years has lived in a dug-out, for the sole purpose of saving house rent.

Something like forty years ago a young Welshman, living in the vicinity of Cambria became homesick and spent all the money he owned on a trip back to the old country—Wales.

Returning a year or so later he found himself in need of a suit of clothes, but without the money to buy it. When he tried to borrow of a friend he met the response some of the rest of us have known, says the Kansas City Star.

He was told that his credit was not good. It was here that the iron entered his soul and he reflected that a little self-denial and saving would put him where he could loan instead of borrow money. He got the use of an acre of ground seven miles from town and built himself a dug-out.

Here he has lived ever since, supporting himself on his garden and on food bought from the village housewives with personal service, such as chopping wood and carrying coal.

Jones is the man's name, and as this is a Welsh neighborhood and at least every third Welshman is named Jones this one is distinguished by adding the name of locality in Wales from which he came, and so he is known as Jones of Holla.

I saw him once. He had come to the boarding house to earn his dinner by some small service, and he sat beside me at the table, a clean, pink-skinned old man with a Santa Claus face and curly white hair and beard. Kind blue eyes looked out from under shaggy white brows, and his table manners were not what you would expect from a man who had lived thirty years alone.

A money-lender no surely is now. Thirty-five years' wages at any ordinary labor put aside or loaned out at interest have given him a hoard of a number of thousands, which he invests and reinvests for the sole purpose of hoarding, while he still lives on in his dug-out, denying himself such costly luxuries as home, in the ordinary sense, and wife and child.

Yet Jones cannot be wholly selfish. They tell how, before his voice grew cracked and old, he took days off to gather the young folks around him and instruct them in singing, but always in Welsh. Years ago, too, when fruit was rare and high priced, he has been known to work for a whole day for a bushel of apples to distribute among the neighbors' children.

One cold October afternoon a friend drove out to see the old man. The place was reached by a ridge road, curving around the edge of a meadow. As we approached we could see across the meadow a little spur of high land jutting down to its level on three sides. On the southern side of this spur was Jones' dugout, shaped from the side of the hill.

Away from it on two sides sloped the land to the hay meadow. On this slope were his vegetable beds. Here and there he had little mounds under which he had cached potatoes and turnips for winter use.

Near the door grew a few peach trees and a grapevine trailed irresponsibly over a rude trellis.

No cow, chicken or other animal marred the perfect grassy cleanliness of every portion of the yard. No dog even sounded a warning bark as we approached. Had Jones been a woman a cat would have crouched in the grass on the lookout for mice, or sprawled asleep near the door; but Jones will have nothing to do with cats.

approached down the little sun came out for the first day and glided the brown oak leaves drifting higher up the slope.

and Jones came forth to a woman, I am afraid, one to "dress up for" for some would have grown slim and dirty, but Jones, of Holla, was not rigged up in the latest style, wearing nothing but socks upon his feet, was, nevertheless, spotlessly clean.

He was glad to see us and showed us his dugout in detail, unconsciously betraying the greatest pride in it. Within, I should say it was possibly ten feet long by eight feet wide, and from floor to ceiling two sides of the room were lined with shelves packed with numberless and nameless things. A small cookstove and goods-box table rubbed elbows on the third side, and the entrance took the most of the fourth. A tomato can was the only cooking utensil in sight.

Papers, boxes, tools, bundles of clothes or rags, thread, thimble, tann, hair-trunk, shoes, books, and bottles filled the shelves.

The uppermost shelf across the end was the old man's bed. Scarcely two feet above it was the ceiling. We could understand how he got into bed, for a three-foot ladder stood below, but how on earth he ever turned over when he got there without bracing himself against the ceiling we couldn't make out.

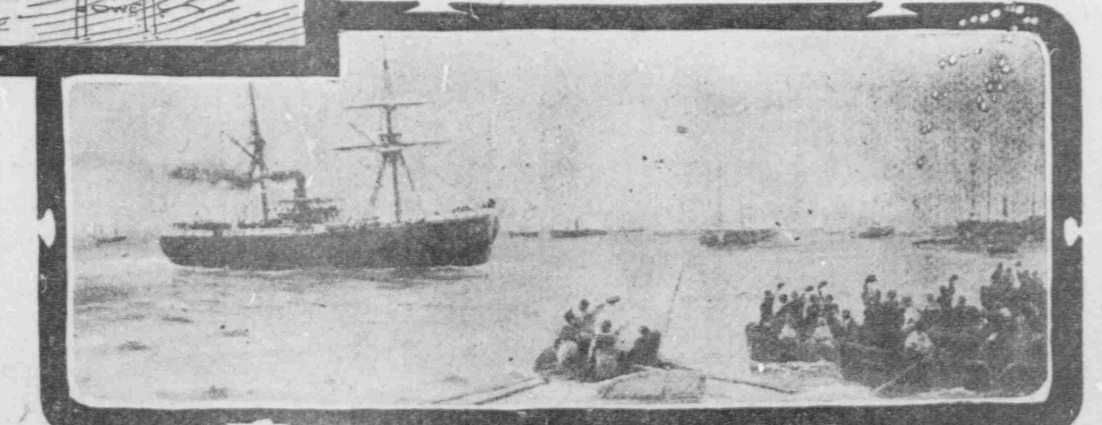


PETITION OF THE STARVING IN CHINA.

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"THE RELIEF S.I.P." Showing an American Vessel Steaming into Vladivostok Harbor, Bearing Supplies for Starving Russians. (From a Painting in the Corcoran Gallery, by J. Aizaszsky, in 1892.)